

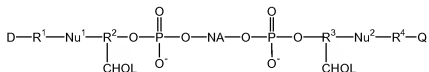
**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1-49. (Canceled)

50. (Previously presented) A probe nucleic acid having the formula:



wherein,

CHOL is a cholesterol derivative;

$\text{R}^1$ ,  $\text{R}^2$ ,  $\text{R}^3$  and  $\text{R}^4$  are linker moieties independently selected from the group consisting of substituted or unsubstituted alkyl and substituted or unsubstituted heteroalkyl;

$\text{Nu}^1$  and  $\text{Nu}^2$  are members independently selected from the group consisting of nucleotide residues and nucleoside residues;

NA is a nucleic acid sequence;

D is a donor of light energy; and

Q is a quencher of light energy,

wherein the CHOL moieties interact to bring D and Q into operative proximity,

thereby enabling transfer of energy from D to Q, and

wherein said probe nucleic acid sequence is not hybridized to a target nucleic acid.

51. (Previously presented) The probe nucleic acid according to claim 50,  
wherein R<sup>2</sup>-CHOL and R<sup>3</sup>-CHOL are independently selected and have structures according to  
the formula:



wherein,

R<sup>11</sup> is a member selected from the group consisting of substituted or unsubstituted  
alkyl and substituted or unsubstituted heteroalkyl;

PEG is polyethylene glycol;

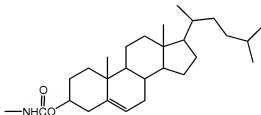
Y<sup>3</sup> is an organic functional group adjoining said PEG to said CHOL.

52. (Previously presented) The probe nucleic acid according to claim 51,  
wherein said PEG has from about 2 to about 20 ethylene glycol subunits.

53. (Previously presented) The probe nucleic acid according to claim 51 in  
which R<sup>11</sup> is substituted or unsubstituted alkyl.

54. (Previously presented) The probe nucleic acid according to claim 53,  
wherein R<sup>11</sup> is C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>6</sub> substituted or unsubstituted alkyl.

55. (Previously presented) The probe nucleic acid according to claim 51,  
wherein Y<sup>3</sup>-CHOL has the structure:

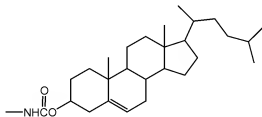




1                    59.    (Previously presented) The probe nucleic acid according to claim 58,  
2    wherein Y<sup>1</sup> and Y<sup>2</sup> are polyethylene glycol.

                  60.    (Previously presented) The probe nucleic acid according to claim 59,  
                  wherein said polyethylene glycol has from about 2 to about 20 ethylene glycol subunits.

1                    61.    (Previously presented) The probe nucleic acid according to claim 57,  
2    wherein Y<sup>1</sup>-CHOL and Y<sup>2</sup>-CHOL have the structure:



1                    62.    (Canceled)